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more legislative or quasi-legislative, and have given increasing attention to humanitarian rather than political interests. They have dealt with a great variety of international questions,—questions of boundary, of the balance of power, of the political independence of states, of slavery, piracy, the neutralization of states and waterways, the rights of commerce on the high seas, foreign residence, the laws of war, the wounded in battle, freedom of religion, transportation of mail, arbitration, bounties on exports, quarantine, sanitation, money and what-not.

The conference meeting at the present moment in New York, in which all the leading republics of this hemisphere are represented, is dealing with the subject of customs regulations, one of the liveliest world-questions of the day.

By holding these frequent meetings the governments have recognized, in the most practical way possible, the fact that there are many important international questions which cannot be handled by them in their individual capacity. These questions are steadily growing in number as the nations become more and more intricately bound together in commercial, social, industrial, economic and philanthropic relations. What the memorial suggests is really nothing new except in form. It is that the governments should do hereafter in a regular and orderly way, and to a wider extent than formerly, what they have been doing in a scrappy and unsystematic manner for more than three-quarters of a century, and what they will be under the necessity of doing in some way frequently in coming years.

The superiority of a stated congress, meeting at reasonably short intervals, over irregular gatherings as emergencies arise scarcely needs to be argued. It will be confessed by practically everybody. The suggestion which has been made that such a body, on meeting, might find itself without anything to do, has nothing in its support. With the growing complexity of international relations, and the consequent multiplication of problems of mutual interest to the nations, there would be more danger that the congress would have to sit on indefinitely than that it would find no business on its calendar.

The more plausible objection, that special conferences of experts to deal with the special issues arising would be better than a regular congress, is really without weight. Such questions would constitute only a small proportion of the whole number and could be satisfactorily dealt with by committees. The general congress would, of course, not prevent the calling of special conferences if there should be any occasion for them, as would not be at all likely. Even purely European or American questions, if there should be such, could easily be treated apart by the representatives from these sections of the world. The world is not likely, however, to move much in halves hereafter, as it has done too much in the past.

We commend this memorial to the careful study of all under whose eyes it may fall, and ask that an effort be made to understand the real nature of the measure proposed before it is rejected or ignored. It was suggested by the practical movements of the time, by what has actually been done, by what the nations themselves recognize as an imperative necessity. There is nothing of the visionary about it. The proposed stated congress would work immediately if established, with even more certainty than the Hague Court has worked; and it is difficult to conceive of anything which would do more to cement the peoples of the world together, in mutual understanding, intelligent respect and genuine amity, and to prevent the recurrence of those miserable clashes which have so often disgraced the very name of man, than the regular meeting from time to time, in serious friendly council, for the promotion of the common good, of able and experienced representatives from all quarters of the globe.

### More Brutality.

The Venezuela situation has not materially changed since our last issue. Minister Bowen has arrived in Washington as the agent of Venezuela, and has begun negotiations with the German and British representatives.

The difficulty, it has been stated, may, after all, be arranged without recourse to the Hague Court. This would not, as has been suggested, be in any way detrimental to the prestige of the Court. On the contrary, one of the most beneficent effects of the existence of the tribunal will be the increased desire among diplomats to adjust disputes themselves by direct negotiation, and the consequent lifting of diplomacy to a much higher plane than it has heretofore occupied.

Meanwhile the swaggering brutality, which has been such a marked feature of the episode, has been continued. The Germans have taken the lead in it, the British abstaining from actual participation, though of course having to share the responsibility for all that has been done. According to all the earlier reports, the attack of the "Panther" on the fort at San Carlos was an act of pure wantonness, unprovoked and without the shadow of an excuse. The German War Minister's contention that the attack was justified by the law of blockade as necessary to teach the Venezuelans the seriousness of the investment, is, under the particular circumstances, the purest chicanery. Venezuela was powerless before the blockade, and any supplies that might have gone across the bay above the bar would have been a mere bagatelle. The attack on the fort, after Mr. Bowen had gone to Washington with full powers to effect a settlement and the German government had accepted arbitration, deserves the severe reprobation which it has every-

where received, even among the German residents of Venezuela. Bad as international law is in some of its aspects, it is not low enough to shield such conduct as this.

Even if the later report from the German commander be true, that the fort fired the first shot at the "Panther" as she was trying to force her way over the bar to seize another Venezuelan vessel, the case is not improved. Why should she have been trying to get beyond the bar for this purpose, with Venezuela helpless and the negotiations going on? No twisting of international law can be made to justify the deed. The result was just what she had figured it would be, and gave her the opportunity desired to do some savage's work.

The upshot of it has been two battles between the fort and the ships, which have cost a number of lives and the destruction of thousands of dollars worth of property, and the rendering of the negotiations more difficult. A still more baneful effect has been the

deepening everywhere throughout America, both North and South, of the feeling, already all too strong, that Germany is only making pretenses of fairness and disinterestedness, while she is really seeking to obtain a foothold upon the South American coast and to defy thence the power and policy of the United States, or to get into open war with this country. This may be, and very probably is, largely imagination, but it serves as well as reality, and is what makes the episode so far reaching in its mischievousness.

The event only illustrates once more the truth of what we said last month, that the cultivation of might leads inevitably to brutality among nations as among men. A good many people are getting their eyes open to this simple fact, and are beginning to see that our nation, as well as others, is getting nearer and nearer to the peril of war and unlimited disaster the more it goes on mailing its fist and encasing its sides in steel.

## A STATED INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

To meet once every Five or Seven Years, to deliberate upon Matters  
of Common Interest to the Nations and make Recom-  
mendations to the Governments.

The time at hand for the Establishment of a Congress of Representatives of All  
the Civilized Nations, to assemble at regular intervals to do the work  
hitherto performed by special Congresses and Conferences.

**The American Peace Society's Memorial to the Massachusetts Legislature, with List of International  
Congresses and Conferences which have met since 1815.**

***To the General Court of Massachusetts:***

The Board of Directors of the American Peace Society, with headquarters in Boston, Massachusetts, respectfully petition your honorable body to adopt a resolution requesting the Congress of the United States to authorize the President of the United States to invite the governments of the world to join in establishing, in whatever way they may judge expedient, a regular international congress, to meet at stated periods — say, every seven years — to deliberate upon the various questions of common interest to the nations and to make recommendations thereon to the governments.